THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS

AND OTHER POEMS

ELIZABETH B. ROBB

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THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS
AND OTHER POEMS

ELIZABETH B. ROBB

CONTEMPORARY POETS OF DORRANCE (78)

THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

ELIZABETH B. ROBB

811
R532m

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To
MY LOVING FRIENDS

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THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS
AND OTHER POEMS

TIGHTENED STRINGS

The charm of music's soul-elating voice
As whispered by the bow on "Tightened Strings,"
Is like a rift in clouds when sunbeams dance
Upon the rippling waters of the lake;
Or like the startled stir of wings
That gently flutter as the feathered tribe
Lights on a welcoming branch, secure
From harm, amidst the sheltering leaves—
Nature's protection to the wild and shy.

Unless the strings are tightened 'twere discord;
No music when the lute is not in tune;
And so the human soul disseminates
Its purest notes, when human heartstrings are
The instrument the soul must play upon;
Making cadence sweet that lilts and trills
Its richest melody from carping care
That drew the heartstrings taut to breaking point.
There is no music but on "Tightened Strings."

BLESSÈD BE SLEEP

Blessèd be sleep,
That recompense for tired and wornout saints
Who watch near beds of pain the whole night through,
Nor seek release when danger stalks at hand
Or death waits, ever ready, toll to grasp.
When life ebbs low, blessèd be sleep!

Blessèd be sleep,
The long day is o'er and night at last appears,
The plowshares turned for many a weary mile
From dawn to sunset, stubble stone and clod—
The whip hand lashing plodding brutes and dumb;
For man and beast, blessèd be sleep!

Blessèd be sleep.
The night wind moans and sighs through leafless trees
That rear their lofty arms as though in prayer;
But naught disturbs the tranquil, peaceful rest
Of them that duty's call have answered with a will
And only ask for sleep.
Blessèd be sleep!

THE TULIP

When Spring awakes what Winter seared,
When heavy snows have disappeared
And killing frost's no longer feared,
Comes forth the tulip.

The rainbow colors draped with grace
Around her dark-eyed smiling face;
The dark brown bulb could not efface
Progressive splendor.

She nods her cup of beauty bright,
And smiles her way with true delight,
While onward march toward Summer's height
The garden's glories.

The pride which later flowers enhance
Is curtailed now by just a glance
Across the waving, vast expanse
That holds the vision.

The tulip waves her nodding head
As gentle zephyrs stir her bed
Of purest white and flaming red
And varied colors.

For Spring has come when tulips blow
Like marching soldiers row on row;
With Spring's advance they come and go
In trail of glory.

E'en thoughtless minds cannot forget
Nor sordid lives made brighter yet
By Nature's early garden pet,
The lovely tulip.

Our love may fickle be in June,
When roses nod toward waning moon,
But in the Spring we're all in tune
With glorious tulip.

Summer is o'er, and Autumn's blended hues
Peep cautiously between the evergreens;
The ferns are browning where the morning dews
Have cooled the sunlight; and wise nature weans
Her blossom children from her loving care.
The Autumn moon sheds its reflected light
And lengthened shadows cast fantastic forms
Like fairies dancing; hoarfrost claims its right
To paint, with artist's touch, a picture that informs
That Winter soon creeps on us unaware.
Nestling between the frowning mountains high
The little town of Manchester portrays
What rugged ancestors (who sleep near by)
Accomplished in those strenuous, ancient days
In architecture, now beyond compare.
The broad low homes, green shuttered, spick and span,
The sloping roofs of shingle, now mossgrown,
The chimneys, broad of beam, that birch fires fan,
The doorways, fretted, knockers, harsh of tone,
The vine-clad porches, marble-stepped and rare,
The broad green lawns, stone walls that now enclose
Old-fashioned gardens, filled with fragrance sweet,
Where honey bees sip nectar from the rose,
And multi-colored dahlias, tall and neat,
Shield beds of sweet alyssum there.
The old Hotel, located on the "Street,"
Stands like a monument of olden days,
With lavish hospitality to greet
Celebrities and humbler folk always,
Who come for golf and recreation share.
The village church, post office and the store,
The tree-lined streets, with locust, elm and pine,
Are all symbolic of that town of yore,
So quaint and restful, and like mellowed wine,
Are typical of New England not elsewhere.
Rest in sweet peace, dear Manchester of old,
Thy hallowed haunts are treasured in our hearts;
Tho' far away in tropic clime or cold,
Our thoughts return to thee and visualize
The tender ties and beauty sheltered there.

BIRMINGHAM MEETING HOUSE

(Scene of Battle of Brandywine, Revolutionary War)

Beneath that rooftree sacred to the heart
Of Quaker ancestry of long ago,
Whose peaceful life flowed on apart
From strife; where harmony did flow
Like placid stream, the limpid Brandywine—

A strange anomoly. That blood be shed
From wounded soldiers fighting for their cause
Just, in their faith of man and country wed
For generations numbered without pause,
To die at last, and rest in holy shrine—

Victor and vanquished in an unmarked grave.
What tales could there be heard anew
Could voices speak again that saw the brave
And noble sacrifice, and courage, too,
Of pomp and power 'gainst torn and tattered foe.

There rest ye both in peace
Within the silent churchyard of the dead;
The redcoat and the blue—'til strife shall cease,
While ancient trees meet silent overhead,
To guard like sentinels that hallowed ground.

TOLERANCE

To accept with equanimity what other folks believe
To overlook what fate decreed as wise,
To show consideration, tho' longing most to heave
The things that jar and jangle; or, to rise
Above the commonplace, through mediocrity.

To sympathize with races who differ physically,
Withhold opinions and coercive power
To mitigate offenses, and not antagonize
The weak, the frail and dull; nor cause to cower
Before the magnitude of majesty.

To let live that which truth condemns to die,
Hold back the power to strike or to efface,
To right the wrongs of humble and obscure,
Nor deem it mighty; but to help to win the race
Against all selfish lure
And bind through tolerance a closer tie.
And this is Tolerance!

MY ROSES

My roses blowing o'er the wall
The breath of incense wafts;
The air is full of fragrance sweet,
Pale petals falling at my feet;
The rose is queen of all.

The modest violet holds its place
In many a loving heart;
The daffodil and crocus bring
Advance of Springtime on the wing
Of Summer's smiling face.

But rose, dear rose, so full of pride,
O'erstands the flowers all.
She reigns in love and beauty bright,
Queen of the day, queen of the night,
Whate'er, where'er betide.

TO A DAFFODIL

A touch of Springtime I bring to you,
The golden daffodil!
She bows her head so gracefully,
She wears her cap so tastefully,
Her gold she spreads so wastefully—
The yellow daffodil!

She comes when all is bleak and cold,
The welcome daffodil!
She heralds Spring so sweetly,
She's all dressed up so neatly,
She makes the days pass fleetly,
The gracious daffodil!

And tho' the rose more stately grows
With many colors blended,
She only blows when Summer heat
Has spread green carpet at our feet,
While nature brings through storm and sleet
The first Spring daffodil.

And so I love the daffodil,
The golden daffodil!
I bless the Power that gave her,
The golden touch that made her,
And in my heart I crave her—
The yellow daffodil!

SING, YELLOW BIRD!

Confined within a narrow cage,
Behind the bars of golden hue,
O bird, of liquid note and trill,
Dost long for wooded hills and space
To spread thy wings?

What thoughts beneath the feathered crown
(If thought could be in tiny brain)
Of downy nest in greenwood tree,
Where mother taught the use of wings
And how to feed?

From tree to tree in balmy air,
What pleasure there to sing all day,
And when the evening shadows lower
To hide in branches thick and green
With head 'neath wing!

Those happy days shall come no more;
On foreign shore thy life is cast,
To sing a joyous song to those
Whom life confines in narrow walls
Far from thy birthland home.
Sing, yellow bird!

MY GARDEN

A patch in the country, my garden,
In my vision of long ago,
I see that loved spot, and its fragrant perfume
Is wafted through years drear with care.

In Springtime the crocus, the tulip,
The lilac and fruit blossoms bloom.
In Summer the rose, the best of them all,
Tho' the annual and perennial I love, too.

In the deepening dusk, at the fall of the year,
The dahlias, chrysanthemums reign.
And in bleak Winter wind with the first fall of snow
Like ghosts stand the evergreens tall.

Each season I greet in my garden,
Each brings all its gifts in their time,
A whole year of pleasure, reward for the care
I have given the garden I love.

THEY NEVER MEET

So near, an outstretched hand could touch
As down life's busy street they pass;
Congeniality in marked degree,
Love, happiness, and all that makes life free—
It may not be!

If heart found heart responsive, true,
How different their lives would be;
Millennium would find its day,
Love, joy, and peace prevail alway,
Could fate will so.

Side by side and passing to and fro,
They never meet, tho' wandering through Time;
Another sees and grasps what's yours or mine;
And thus we miss and never know—
Fate willed it so!

THE DAHLIA

O Dahlia dear, thou art a dream to me!
Of sunny clime and skies cerulean blue,
Colors that blend as with the rainbow hue;
Thou art, indeed, a flower fair to see.

Stately and tall, the garden's guardian friend
O'erlooks the modest violet near the wall!
Marigold and zinnia, phlox and all
The lovely horde, greetings to thee we send!

'Tis hard to choose where all hold sacred sway
Within a heart that thrills to nature's call,
When ev'ry quiv'ring leaf, or flower tall
Uplifts the seeking soul, and points the way

To higher plane, and surcease brings to pain.
O Dahlia friend! To thee we give the crown.
What carest thou for all a world's renown!
Just lift thy head, thy glory shall remain.

LULLABYE

Rockabye, hushabye, sing me to sleep.
The new moon is peeping where young willows weep;
The bright stars are gleaming,
The soft air is teeming,
With fairies that sing as they rock me to sleep.

Rockabye, hushabye, warm is my bed,
'Tis mother's soft bosom that cradles my head,
With arms clasped around me,
No dangers confound me,
No fear bars the way by her gentleness led.

Rockabye, hushabye, years have gone by,
Since she sung me to sleep with this dear lullabye;
When days have been weary and nights have been
dreary
I've longed for her voice and this old lullabye.

Rockabye, hushabye, dear baby mine,
With you may it linger, this lullabye line,
'Twill help you in sorrow
And gladden the morrow,
For angels are singing that song so divine.

THE FALLING LEAF

Slowly with undulating curves
Descends the leaf whose usefulness is o'er;
Yellow and sere its lifeblood swerves—
Naught left! Disintegration is its end.
Not e'en a fragment left to tell
What life had meant when life in fullest prime
Was rich in power its services to lend.

The grateful shade from Summer's sun
The mother tree cast o'er the parchèd land
Drew water from deep-bedded rocks,
And bubbling springs gushed quickly forth
Beginnings of great rivers. Though
Dead the leaf, Spring brings again from brown-barked tree
New life, that on and on renews and lives.

WOMEN BUILDERS

Builders are we for better lives
For those who toil and spin.
Builders are we for all oppressed,
That they the truth may win.

Builders are we for national pride,
To keep our country free
From hatred, malice, graft, and greed.
Will you a builder be?

Our motto, Truth; our banner, Faith;
Our duty, to uplift.
With Truth and Faith and Duty,
To build is woman's gift.

So rally round our banner true,
Come, join our forces strong,
And be a Woman Builder,
And this shall be our song.

A RAINY DAY

The sun is hid behind the clouds,
The mist is on the sea,
The fog obscures the anchored ships,
'Tis silent on the lea.

The rain beats down upon the pane,
'Tis dreary, sad and lone;
With heavy hearts and tear-dimmed eyes
We hear the breakers moan.

A ray of light across the sky,
A rift in clouds above,
When lo, the sun comes smiling through;
Our hearts are thrilled with love.

And such is life from birth to death,
Days dark, then bright and fair,
The need of both as balances,
Lest grief or joy prevail.

A silver lining underneath,
When clouds the sunbeams rout;
So simply turn the clouds around,
And wear them inside out!

CASTLE GLENMEDE

In the solemn hush of midnight,
Falling dew and misty air,
The rising moon's reflected light
On Castle Glenmede!

Budding trees and blossoms peeping,
Awak'ning nature's winter sleep,
'Til summer glory is in keeping
With Castle Glenmede.

Happy hearts are there enfolded
In its spacious depths serene,
Rest in love—God's benediction
On Castle Glenmede!

WHITE CAPS ON THE SEA

The crested billows roll and toss
  Far in the distance blue;
Breaking and foaming,
As into the gloaming,
My vision lends dreams to the view.

Beyond the horizon, what can there be?
  Dream thought that questions or doubts;
Lazily, hazily,
Ponder amazingly,
  My daydream the white cap routs.

A strong wind blows from out the North,
  The blue is changed to gray,
The white caps nigh
Are mountain high,
  A mighty storm holds sway.

My dreams are changed to awe and fear,
  Reality, not doubt;
The lightning flashes,
The raindrop dashes,
  And thunder roars without.

I quickly close my window-pane,
  But gaze upon the scene,
Safely protected,
The storm unexpected—
  'Twill soon be over, I ween.

LITTLE CHILDREN

When little children come to bless our home,
To fill our hearts with joy beyond compare,
They fill a void that caused our feet to roam;
And scatter sunshine where had been despair.

The little feet that patter on the floor,
The loving arms that clasp in childish glee,
The eager knock upon the study door,
Can we resist that voice so pleadingly?
Time's changes ring upon the passing years,
The little life to larger stature grown,
The coming future fills our eyes with tears,
As youth steps boldly forth to paths unknown.

All life is thus and useless fears delay
The accomplishment our wiser thought had
planned;
Each life its own initiative must play,
From youth to golden age must take its stand.

So guide the children into virtue's way,
Teach love and reverence, honor, faith, and joy,
Instill, while young, the habit to obey,
Seek not perfection, gold without alloy.

None perfect in this faulty world of ours,
Life's lessons learned must be—and failure
warns—
Too easy were the path to future powers—
E'en beds of roses harbor hidden thorns.

HOME

The house may be little, an apartment, perhaps—
But the spirit of home it contains,
The walls close around, holding love that is found
Where naught other than love yet remains.

How small or how large, it may be just a room,
But it closes the world from our view,
There to rest and refresh life weary from toil,
Hope springs in the heart there anew.

Were the world without home 'twere a desolate place
And wanderers all would we be,
No joy can compare with the joy that we share,
Home is "Home," same to you and me.

BIRTHDAYS

From one to twenty-one
A birthday is a treat;
Pride waneth after thirty;
But then at eighty comes again
Honors for each succeeding year
Of life, until the hundredth one and more we meet—
And less of life we know.

AN ODE

If I like bird in air could wing my flight,
And soar where human feet could never tread,
And see, with birdlike vision, whose abnormal sight
God-given for protection, where'er led;
If I, like ocean wave, could roll and roll
And kiss the feet of shores in tropic clime,
Or tow'ring high and breaking like a soul
That waits in weary, never ending time
Its rebirth or incarnate life anew;
Or, like a song that fills the vibrant air
And trills for aye, its purpose 'complished, too—
I'd happy be for all eternity,
And bless the Maker that He madeth me.

WHAT THEN?

So many things to say
So many things to do
So many things to fill the hours
That swiftly pass away!

If all the things were said
And all the things were done
And all the hours were filled—
What then?

TIME'S CHANGES

When you and I were young,
Some thirty years ago,
The hallowed paths we trod with footsteps light,
And free from every care that mortals know,
When you and I were young,
Some thirty years ago.

When we were very young
And innocence our charm,
We dreamed that happiness could never fade,
The future like the present always be,
When we were very young
And innocence our charm.

But now that we are old,
Gray-haired, with faces wan,
Time's changes trace the lines and all behold
The imprint deep, tho' softened by the gray.
Now we are old, they say,
Time changes you and me.

Our love has never changed,
Since thirty years ago,
More tender made by life's incessant grind
And strengthened by the shadows that have passed,
As hand in hand we go
To meet what fate decreed
Some thirty years ago.

DREAMING

As I sit in the haze of the twilight,
When nature is going to rest,
And the twinkling stars appear one by one,
And the deep'ning shadows attest
That the silent night to my thought gives flight,
As it soars away in unrest,

I ponder upon the themes of life,
The meaning the stars could tell,
If I were attuned to those heavenly orbs
Or I in their planes could dwell.
Would life be truer and fairer there
Or only my longings quell?

Would the God of love seem nearer to me
Or farther away than here?
Would the thrills of joy be ecstatic with bliss?
Or keener the pain and fear?
Methinks I would sigh and prefer to die
If the change brought not Heaven near.

But I know that the one whose name is Love,
Must dwell in those realms afar,
My vision is dimmed to a closer view,
'Til love sets the gates ajar;
And when I'm in tune with that world above,
I'll find my particular star.

COMMUNISM

A spectre grim with face of flame,
Not hollowed eye as were the ghosts of old,
But, bulging, bursting forth, as tho' the name of Red
Would shatter all the weakened creeds, once bold.

It creeps with slow, insidious step,
Like tentacles its grasp, that holds and binds.
It backs against the wall when opposition sways
And snuffs out life, as does the mighty wind
Blow out a candle near a casement wide.

THE TOMB

On a hillside on the Potomac,
Near the home he loved so well,
Is the resting place of Washington.
In reverence may we dwell
On heroic deeds of history,
More than the tongue can tell.

He rests in stately glory
Beside his noble wife,
The ivy clinging to the walls,
Symbolic of his life
That clung to truth and honor,
All heedless of the strife.

And gave our country freedom
From chains that did enthrall;
The iron rod of oppression
Was broken once for all.
The Father of his Country,
Who heeded freedom's call!

All hail to thee! Our Chieftain,
Our leader, brave and true,
Thy deeds of love and sacrifice
Inspire us all to do
Great deeds for all humanity.
God will direct us, too.

Thy sleep in life eternal,
Unbroken, calm and sweet,
Beyond the sound of battle,
The tread of marching feet,
In resurrection's glory,
Where nation's heroes meet.

HOME COMING

'Twas an old-fashioned house
In an old-fashioned street
By the march of time and progress left behind.
To the silver-haired folk
Who called the place home
The fleetly passing years had been most kind.

Tho' with hoarfrost on the head
There was sunshine in the heart;
Contentment reigned and life was full of cheer.
The seamy side of life
Had been conquered without strife,
For love had stood the test of wintry wind.

On the faded papered walls
In the broad oak-beamed halls
The family portraits hung, inspiring awe;
There were lords and ladies, too;
Soldier boys with coats of blue,
And gray and drab and olive tan combined.

A footstep on the walk
As the old folks paused in talk
Of the blue-eyed boy who left them years ago.
Father hobbled on his cane
And saw out in the rain
A man so strange and lame and ragged, too,

Who staggered in the door
Prostrate upon the floor
And frightened them as they drew back again.
He mumbled, "Father, Mother,"
Then they knew it was no other
Than the long-lost boy who'd grieved them years ago.

He told his tale of woe,
How life had failed him so,
He was ashamed to face his parents dear,
But as years rolled on and on
He remembered then the song, his mother sang:

"Come back, my boy, to me
When the whole wide world you see
And find no resting place for weary head.
I'll be waiting for you there
In the house we used to share
When your little feet went pattering to and fro."

There were happy days in store
For the three who asked no more
Than that God would spare their own dear, erring son.
Death passed him by, and life
Made up for all the strife
For he'd found the place that housed his mother's song.

MEMORY

O Memory! My soul on bended knee to thee
Would fain look back, nor heed the flight of time.
With clearer vision, now, thy truths I see,
Then, life's unlearnèd lessons seemed to be
Endurance tests, effaced as each goal won,
More difficult the next and longer race to run.

Through Memory visions saddened hearts gain faith
And live to see that Life, tho' dark, was fair
And prove that fear of Life is but a wraith
To haunt, unnerve, unfit the aftermath
When Age should conquer all the fears of Youth,
But leave to Memory, glorious, noble Truth.

PEOPLE

What do you think of people,
The average, every-day bunch;
Just folks we meet on the roadway,
Or brush past in the onrush to lunch?

Each day brings new interesting faces.
Do we ever stop to compare
The likeness to this one or that one—
Same face met anew everywhere?

There is such a variety of faces
It's a wonder the pattern can last,
So few show the least of the traces
Of origin feature or cast.

In this country of ours such a mixture
Of Teuton and Briton and Swede,
Of Irish and Swiss and Norwegian,
Italian and Scotch, that we need

A composite picture of people,
The melting pot mixture to date—
An American born in the mixing!
What more can be asked? It's just fate.

NOT ALONE

To walk along the shore
As waves beat high,
Gazing afar
Across the distant sea.

What thrills delight the soul!
The majesty of might
Across the deep
Rolls thunderlike to me.

No human eye to gaze,
No footprints see.
Heaven opens through the haze—
Just God and me!

WASHDAY

Have you ever noticed the clothes on the line
When the wind is blowing a gale?
Like human forms they bow and prance
Tho' dumb, they tell a tale.

There's father's nightshirt, long and wide
And mother's nightgown, too;
Bill's pajams have plaids and stripes
And sister Nell's are blue.

Buddy Boy's are made from Bill's
When Bill's have served their time,
The air is full of dancing thrills
When the clothes hang on the line.

The sheets like ghosts swing back and forth,
The towels like flags will wave;
The stockings bulge like sausages,
The dresses can't behave.

There's something there for baby sweet—
Dear child so full of charm—
His "nightie nights" have tiny feet
To keep him snug and warm.

And as we view the family wash,
Strung on the clothesline long,
We think we know the family, too,
And wish them cheer and song.

MOONLIGHT

I wonder what the "Man in the Moon"
Does with himself all day?
Does he sleep and eat to keep in tune
While the stars around him play?
Perhaps he trims his silver lamps
That light him on his way.

Oh, I'd like to be with the "Man in the Moon"
When the daylight turns to dark,
How I'd love to peep over his shoulder broad,
Oh, wouldn't it be a lark
To tell him just when to hide his face
And when to put on the spark?

I'd be a friend to lovers true,
For I'd be a lover free.
I'd hide behind a soft white cloud,
My "Man in the Moon," and see
That while we were waiting up there in the dark
That you'd be in love with me.

TO BE ALONE

How hard to be alone in this progressive day
With noise and crowding;
Too many everywhere,
No quiet anywhere,
Vocal noises clatter with nothing much to say.

Wave-washed by distraction, entertained against our will
As city dwellers—
With amusement everywhere,
Elbowed, jostled here and there.
How pleasant to be lonely once, could everything be still!

Modernity no offer has of quiet, peace and rest.
Vivacity's the rage—
Too many, many everywhere,
Continual racket, din and glare!
One never now can lonely be except within the grave.

SAINTS

Who never trod the primrose path,
And never told a lie,
And never spoke an unkind word,
Are they prepared to die?

What joy can Heaven give to them
Who knew but joy on earth?
A little slip 'twixt cup and lip
Makes need of Heaven's worth.

To fall beneath the weight of sin
And rise to heights benign
A greater scope of Heaven gives,
Uplift worth while, Divine.

If there are saints on earthly plane,
Why have they need of Heaven?
Heaven is recompense and gain,
Sinner and saint to leaven.

DOGWOOD

Drab stalks of yesterday are now
The beauty of a thousand hills;
With dogwood blossoms pink and white
Are field and forest bright.

Untouched they last and bring delight
For generations yet unborn,
That they may revel in the forest's joy
And Nature's gift.

But vandals, with their loot in spring,
Return with spoils of leaf and flower;
Like locusts on the land, they strip
Root, branch and flower tip.

Beladen is the pillaging horde;
The broken branches sadly weep,
No thought or care for damage wrought
On pleasure trip.

Why not content to gaze and pass?
Let live the woods with beauty rare.
Enjoy what blossoms give to spring;
To autumn gemlike berries bring

To feed the feathered throng
That brave dire winter 'mid the snows
And carry seeds to new abode
While joyful notes they sing.

Cease, thoughtless ones, while there is time
To save the beauty of the woods!
Feast with the eyes but leave untouched
What only droops and dies.

WORDS

The gate to knowledge is closed,
But to those who hold the key
The gate swings wide, and none are denied
If willing to pay the fee.

The road is long and steep,
No short cut through the wood.
Just climb to the top without a stop.
He who would do it, could.

The key that opens the gate
That leads to attainment's goal
From words is made—words cannot fade
But immortal are, like the soul.

THE TOP OF THE HILL

Why stay in the lowlands
When hilltops invite
A view that is broad in expanse?
A glimpse of the sky on a clear moonlight night
All the raptures of vision entrance!

Why stay in the lowlands
Miasmic and drear,
When the hills the pure ether enfolds?
Climb up, tho' the climbing be slow, long, and weary
The end is a glory untold.

You'll ne'er be content
At the foot of the hill,
After conq'ring the road to the crest;
The uplift and thrill, from the top of the hill,
Climax all a wild hope could suggest.

SEEKING FOR THINGS WE NEVER FIND

Seeking for things we never find,
Things unseen like the summer wind,
Or like the mist on a stormy sea,
That hides the boat sails
From you and me.

Seeking for things we long to find,
From dawn to dark, from dark to dawn,
The endless search, with faces drawn,
For things elusive—
How they bind

The heart, the soul, the thought, the mind!
We grasp at straws with lifted hope,
Only to sink the deeper. Scope
Of vision narrowed,
Almost blind.

Shall we who reach eternity
In some far-distant night beyond,
Come face to face with things that be?
All truths revealed,
Ne'er to despond

And end the lifelong search for peace,
The struggle, heartache, greed, and snare
Find everlasting sweet release
From biting wound
And carping care?

If such in coming future be,
The goal is worth the struggle long
To penetrate the mystery.
And laureled be
The victor's song.

If things we sought will then be found,
The vision cleared by love divine,
Eternity is one long day
Of service, peace,
And joy sublime.

THE SEASHELL*

High on a buff where the salt breezes blow,
There stands a tiny cottage, and far down below
Sea-swept rocks, where gulls poise in their flight,
Break the huge waves into foam billows white.

With bayberry, roses, juniper and fern
The steep banks are covered, and there, as you turn
You'll see the red clover and buttercups, too,
Dwarfed by salt winds, but nourished by dew.

In that dear little cottage, two sisters you'll find
With arms opened wide and a look that is kind;
They welcome the stranger as one of their own,
With low voices sweet as hay just new-mown.

The walls are draped round with a fisherman's net
Holding shells, stones, and seaweed, and curios, wet
With the fog that comes in at the casement so wide,
And we hear the dull roar of the incoming tide.

The fireplace offers its welcome and cheer,
Where the birch logs are crackling, and smoke curling near
The hot coals that fall from the firedogs so old,
Where the crane hangs invitingly, stories are told.

The spirit of mother, whom God called away,
Pervades every nook of that cottage by day,
And is night's guardian angel, so peaceful and calm,
While the shadows that linger are friendly and warm.

'Twas a dream, such a dream, that comes once to a life
Far away from the turmoil of city and strife.
And my thoughts they shall linger; my voice it shall tell
Of that one happy day lived in a Seashell.

*This little poem was written after a day's visit in a little cottage on an island in Casco Bay, Maine. The house was called "The Seashell."

BELGRADE LAKES

The rippling song of waves at eve
With sun low in the west,
The pines and birches flank the shore—
'Tis here we come to rest.
Birds sing their farewell evening tune
Of thanks for life and care,
Then seek their downy nests, and soon,
Find new life hov'ring there.
The chipmunk to his mate he chirps
And speeds from tree to tree,
Storing his winter treasures
Where no human eye can see.
The mountains rear their lofty heights
Far in the distance blue,
Along the shore the twinkling lights
Of fireflies golden hue.
'Tis peaceful, quiet, all serene
Far from the noise of town.
Who would not choose so dear a spot
With stars to light night's crown?

THE WINGED VICTORY

Chiseled by creative hands
In marble pale and cold,
No sluggish pulses her enthrall
Nor sagging sinews wait the call
Of speed to victory.

In perfect symmetry she stands,
Equipped for struggle bold;
Through boundless air her flight to be,
To prove her claim to sovereignty,
This wingèd victory!

Could sculptor breathe the breath of life
In this cold, pallid clay,
Space could not halt, nor fear unnerve,
These wingèd feet, nor cause to swerve,
From path to victory.

But man-made wings not yet inured
To unknown space and vast,
Tho' countless lives have paid the price,
Creative mind will in a trice
Find wingèd victory.

THE CAMPERS

They come and go, the campers,
The summer's passing on—
Vacations soon are over
And those with faces wan
Have now the glow of health and strength,
For nature never pampers.

The old, the young, the children,
The lovers shy and bold—
The newlyweds in evidence
As happy as of old
When fathers, mothers, too, were young.
The world is now as then.

The shore is strewn with ashes
Where campfire embers glowed;
The sky is streaked with color
Of rose and grey and gold.
The frost has touched the autumn leaves
Like artist's palette splashes.

When bleak and cold November
And ice and snow appear,
And silent are the cabins,
Where once rang song and cheer,
The campers now in city homes
Those happy days remember.

When winter sports are over,
And spring the blossom brings,
When trees again are clothed in green,
And trilling bluebird sings,
The campers plan for coming joys—
The young, the old, the lover.

THE WISSAHICKON

Through dell and dale, o'er stone and rocky bed
With ripple faint, the Wissahickon flows;
Whose mossy banks like velvet green have led
The tired feet to rest.
O'erhead in branches thick with quiv'ring leaves
The bluebird and the robin tune their notes;
Across the winding path the spider weaves
His dew-encrusted web.
The tiny wavelets in a deeper pool,
Where minnows dart and snap at morsel sweet,
Reflect the shadows from the lacy knoll
Where elderblossoms nod.
The chipmunk, squirrel and the startled hare
Come down to drink where deeper shadows lie;
And fronded ferns bow gracefully, whose lair
Protection for the shy.
How peaceful and how restful is the scene!
O gently flowing stream of Indian name,
Dost thou remember when the bold-eyed brave
His dusky lady wooed?
With bow and arrow hunting for his prey
He spied her kneeling at the brookside deep,
Her brown hands cupped to quaff the pearly spray
That rippled at her feet.
The vision caused his arrow dart to fall;
He knelt beside her as she rose to flee—
Not swift enough but caught by lover tall,
His happy bride to be.

FALL FLOWER

Dahlia so fair, dahlia so rare,
To world-weary heart brings relief,
Uplifting the soul from its burden of care
With joy, panacea to grief.

Dahlia so gay, dahlia so tall,
With beauty that rivals the rose,
Stately it stands near the old garden wall—
Such dignity, poise and repose!

THE FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER

The four-leaved clover I found today
I send to you, my friend,
And tho' you now are far away,
The absence soon will end.

Hope, faith and love the clover says,
And luck is thrown in, too,
With faith and love for all our days,
We'll hope for luck, anew.

GRIEF

Oh! Why give hope
  Where hope can ne'er be found?
'Tis sorrow beats its pulse
  The whole world round.

Is there a place
  Where nought but joy is found?
Where mortals long gone hence
  In realms of peace abound?

My soul has sought in many a passing year
  What others seek and find, with scarce a tear.
But doubt intrudes,
  When hope should cast out fear.

Full many a life
  Is wrecked on Time's vast sea
With hope deferred
  Where faith has ceased to be.
In Life's discard, what will my future be?

THE DANCE

Dance, dance, joyous and free,
Dance the light fantastic;
Dance, dance, and fairylike be,
The dance is romantic, elastic.

The old-fashioned dance to the past has been flung
Like an old shoe with usefulness o'er;
Minuet, full of grace, the polka, the waltz,
The schottische, and how many more?

Now that Jazz is the fad,
All the world has gone mad,
For the weird, the unusual, the unknown;
The dance that was graceful gives place to the risqué,
So learn Jazz or you'll dance all alone.

BLEACHED BONES

O'er desert wastes the train sped on
As tho' a fear of horror urged its flight;
Bleak mountains, bare of growth upon
Their rugged tops that reach to lofty height.

No life could long exist thereon
Where raindrops dry almost before they fall,
Where blistering sun takes toll at dawn,
And death the penalty demands of all

Who venture where no human feet should tread.
The train sped on
Nor paused nor halted on its hurried way.
One glance enough the story told
Bleached bones, where fallen, on that desert lay.

IF YOU COULD SEE

If you could see,
As others see,
Yourself
Through introspection—
You'd camouflage,
Or try to dodge,
What
Looks like imperfection.

If they could see
You as you are,
Like
Mirrors in reflection—
You'd close the door
Forever more,
Against
Such close inspection.

LIFE

Life is a mixture of doubt and fear,
Of gladness and sorrow, song and cheer;
From infancy to the end of life
There's turmoil and trouble, laughter and strife.

We're compelled to accept its eccentricity,
Tho' we like it or not, it produces the gold,
The passport we need for eternity
Thro' the furnace of fire (or so we've been told).

But life's at its best when acceptance of fate
Brings peace and contentment wher'er we may roam;
For the things we most strive for may come too late,
While the best that's in life may be found here at home.

INSPIRATION

It comes as a flash of light
From out the dim nowhere,
Some nodule of the brain accepts the challenge
And creative thought comes forth.
Like magic hand it opes the doors of mind,
Lets in a flowing stream of rhythm.
A new idea bursts to bloom
But fades almost before the thought is born.
And this is inspiration!

CHILDHOOD

Children are the mimics of their elders,
They copy what attracts or pleases best;
To be like Dad or Mother,
Little Sister, little Brother—
An attainment to accomplish with a zest!

Note children in their romping or their play,
The family rôle they all love to select;
And the tone of Father, Mother,
Is the tone of little Brother,
Stern or gentle, sharp or pleasant in effect.

Little children are the most severe of critics,
And often are the hardest to deceive,
They question closely everything,
With whys and wherefores; and a string
Of answers to your questions you receive.

Their little brains are working overtime;
When least expected some new thoughts evolve;
It puzzles Father, Mother,
To answer yet another,
To stick to truth and yet the problem solve.

LONGING

Oh that I could mold my thoughts
To idealistic realms unseen,
And bring forth from a keener mind
Poetic lines in finer strain;
'Twould be my gain.

But passing scenes obtrude and dim
The nobler thoughts that try to rise,
Amid confusion effort fails;
When choked by grime and sin
How hard to win!

I'd hie me to some lofty mount
Above the clouds of discontent
And there alone, thought undefiled,
Let flow my hymn of praise,
And bless the days

That cloudless shine so bright
With love's refulgent rays,
Where night is just a passing shade
To make more clear the coming day
That points the Way.

Then thought would flow in rhythm pure,
Unhampered would its outlet run;
The mysteries unveiled would be;
My muse would guide the thought and pen
Beyond the human ken.

And thoughts before unknown to men
Would be revealed, and tales untold
To mortals long gone hence would be
As sands along the ocean shore,
Forever more.

Could dreams come true in this old world,
  Would satisfaction satisfy?
Or only be the stepping-stone
  To higher dreamland heights and fame
And nobler name?

Methinks I'd try if fate decreed,
  My chance to win I'd not refuse;
The challenge I'd accept; and may
  My Star in the ascendent be
When chance finds me.

MOTHER

A mother's love lasts through the years,
From birth 'til close of life,
The guiding care of infant small,
And later years through strife.

Desolate a life without her smile,
Her greeting kind and low,
Her tender arms that clasp around,
We feel where'er we go.

The love that comes through friendships dear,
Sometimes seems to prevail,
But mother love, though far or near,
Endures when friendships fail.

On mother love we place the crown,
And lift her standard high,
We may receive a world's renown,
But 'twill not satisfy.

We long for true and loving hearts,
A firm foundation seek,
'Tis only found in mother love,
Like Christ's, so pure and meek.

We stood beside the river—
  Alone in the twilight haze,
Our hearts were all a'quiver,
  Hands clasped in a mystic maze.

My life had been sad with sorrow,
  The day had been weary and long—
My outlook is bright for the morrow,
  For she gave me the soul of a song.

"I love you, I love you," the song rang,
  I hear it all the day long,
Her soul in those words answered my soul,
  For her soul was the soul of the song—

"I love you, I love you."

THE OLD PINE TREE

Why lay the axe to the old pine tree
That has stood the test of years,
As the rain beats down on its noble crown
And showers with drops like tears?

For the days long gone since a seedling bud
Looked up at the sky so clear,
And many the tales of joy and grief—
Could that old tree talk, my dear.

The nests of birds that rocked and swayed
When gales blew o'er the land,
The passing flock that rested there—
Oh, let the old tree stand!

You say a road must pass that way?
Well, build the road, I say,
But build it round the old pine tree
The tree has right of way!

That old pine tree, we love it so
We grieve its death to see;
So let it stand so brave and grand
Let it a landmark be.

LOVE WILL FIND THE WAY

Why droop and fear when love is near
For love will find the way;
Lift up your eyes unto the skies
And see the light of day.

Your vision then will clearer be
Beyond the fog so gray;
And hope and faith dispel the wraith,
And love will find the way.

Love, the Divine, the penitent's shrine!
Just fold the hands and pray,
Believing as receiving
That love will find the way.

The gift accept; 'tis freely given
The radiant light of day.
The soul is free, no more to flee,
For love has found the way!

OUT OF THE FOG

Out of the fog I lift my soul
Into the rapturous heights above,
Out of the haze that covered me,
Into the realms of eternal love.

With clearer vision now I see;
Then, doubt assailed each passing thought,
Out of the depths, into the heights
Inimitable power freely wrought.

I was the fog that dimmed my soul
I, the barrier that barred the way;
Unthinkingly, unknowingly,
Stood on the brink, with feet of clay.

But now the sun shines through the gloom,
My soul no more for light shall pine—
Eternity is one long day,
The light, intelligence Divine.

YELLOWSTONE LAKE

At eventide, when low the sun
Dips o'er the snow-capped peaks,
A rainbow bright from passing storm appears.
The whitecaps from the rolling lake
Lash the rock-strewn shore;
The wild flowers droop their nodding heads,
As night comes down.

The birds give songs of thanks,
And seek their nests;
The gulls fly low in search of food;
My soul, enraptured, seeks eternal heights,
Ecstatic thrills lift vision high to God,
Creator of all good and perfect gifts.

COURAGE

When life seems drear
And many a tear
Down hollow cheek is coursing,
Just lift your head
Ask to be led,
And smile, tho' smiles need forcing.

For tears and sighs
And heavy eyes,
Though worthy be the sorrow,
Will hold you back
And you will lack confidence for the morrow

So "grin" and bear,
No matter where
Life leads your feet so lagging;
For he who smiles,
Through weary miles,
Success will reach without fagging.

THE SONG

Sing while the heart is young and free;
  Sing while the sun is shining.
Sing for the love that comes to thee,
  And let there be no repining.

For days may come when the sun is gone
  With the love that made us carefree;
The tone of life will change with the song
  And shadows creep where 'twas sunny.

MESSAGE OF THE BELLS

The bells hang high in the tower.
Listen!
A message they bring to you,
From bronzèd throats on the vibrant air
They ring for pomp and power.

They peal forth joy, the wedding bells.
Hark!
They slowly toll the funeral knells,
Last rites for peasant or king.

To some the uplift of success,
To some the doom of defeat,
To some 'tis peace of purpose fulfilled,
To some they mean retreat.

But whatever the message true,
Wait!
Accept with a thankful heart,
Whatever it be for you or me,
It rings, "NEARER-MY-GOD-TO-THEE."

THOUGHTS

My soul that soars on lofty heights,
With earthly vision closed to view,
Shall feast on rapturous delights
Reserved for God's selected few.

Be calm, dear soul, and wait the call,
'Twill come when thou art least prepared;
Watch for the signal, nor enthrall
Thyself, nor ever be ensnared.

With open mind and loving heart
Look to thy God for enlightenment;
Heraldic angels know thou art
Inspired by gifts from Heaven sent.

Live close to God, do good to man;
Thy crown with stars shall radiant be;
Good deeds and love expended here
Shall last for all Eternity.

A CAROL

The midnight hush is o'er the plain,
The stars' and moon's pale light
Unusual brilliance tell of the reign
Of Christ, the Saviour, babe so bright,
The shepherds are afraid.

Trembling they stand and watch a star
Down toward the East they pause and gaze,
Then follow from near and from far.
On they go through a mystic maze,
For there the Wise Men are.

Behold in a manger the Saviour lay,
As told by the prophets old—
In the air are angels whose voices say—
"Glory to God! ye shepherd fold,
And worship your newborn Lord!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

THANKSGIVING

Thankful? For what?
For loving care and guidance through the days
Where toil and rest and grief and love are mingled

Thankful? For what?
Tho' war's dread cloud still hovers in the distance
It will not fall on this our peaceful land.

Thankful? For what?
For Plenty's bounteous crops for Winter's need;
For joy of conscious duty well performed.

Thankful? For what?
For hearts receptive still to make us thankful—
Lord, bear with us for still another year!

A LITTLE BROWN BIRD

A little brown bird in a green willow tree
Was singing merrily, merrily as could be,
To his little brown mate in the green willow tree
While she sat on her nest so patiently,
Warming the eggs where new life would soon be.

That little brown bird sang a song of love
To his dear little mate in the nest above;
His heart was light as away he'd rove
To find a choice worm for his turtledove
Who was guarding her eggs in a labor of love.

So, in human life, if the one who can sing
To the one who is sad, would his message bring,
That song would into the ages ring
And echo long, like the tune of a string
As soft as the sound of an angel's wing.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP

A tender plant is friendship,
It fills the heart with joy;
When friends are true and loving
'Tis gold without alloy.

'Twill stand the test of sorrow
Firm as a rockbound coast;
It waits not for the morrow,
Today it prizes most.

Tho' distant paths enchant us,
Or ocean waves divide,
The same stars shine on friendship
Whate'er, wher'er betide.
Hands clasp across the distance,
Heart to each heart beats true,
For friendship is the password
That stands 'twixt me and you.

THE BARREN TREE

The Master walked within the grove
So rich with fruit and flower,
As to His followers He talked
And gave to them His power
To heal the sick and lead the blind.
Oh, how they loved that Master Mind!

With keen, observing eye He saw
A barren fig tree there.
" 'Tis useless thus," the Master said,
"So cut it down, and where
"It grew, another shall be placed."
Oh! How illumined was His face.

A lesson thus He taught to them.
And we, His children, too,
Shall profit by those words divine
And strive His works to do.
And if our bodies barren be,
Lord, fill our hearts with love of Thee.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

Why bow the head as tho' in shame—
A heavy cross you bear?
That cross was borne for you and me
By One who died on Calvary.
Why not believe, O downcast soul,
The truth shall make you free?

Lift up your heads, ye closèd gates,
And gaze upon His face—
The crown of thorns once pierced His brow;
His sacred blood was shed that now
The world redeemed shall be—
Awake that others, too, may know

That truth shall make them free!
Be not afraid! No fear for them
That love His works to do.
Lead on! And help the weak to know
That only love can conquer woe
And truth shall set them free.

When time no more the finger points
To doors that opened wide,
When earth and Heaven at last are one,
When crown the King, God's only Son—
The truth has made you free.

PROGRESS

In ancient time ere swirling atoms joined
To be united into form and shape,
When darkness black as Erebus prevailed
And sound was silence—

From out the vast unknown a voice proclaimed:
"Let there be light!" and brilliant was the dawn.
The sun in rising splendor made the day;
Moon and the stars the night.

From out the twirling mass the earth appeared
With verdure clad; in six days reached perfection,
With all the universe in perfect rhythm,
The singing stars in tune.

With fruits and flowers and every living thing
The earth was rich, and last, the human form
Of man, God's greatest gift to earth,
In image like to God.

But man desired companionship and love,
So God made Eve for him from man himself,
In beauty wrapt and form in perfect mold—
So runs the story old.

Life was serene and happiness prevailed;
The days passed swiftly on and all was peace,
When suddenly temptation stalked therein
And both fell victims.

Driven from out the garden's sheltering care
They wandered hopelessly, day after day,
Searching for refuge and a place to lay
Their weary heads.

The wrath of God was meted out to them;
With heads bowed low they sought in vain to hide
Their shame from Him who made them pure.
Each blamed the other.

The night winds moaned; wild beasts that once were
kind
Hindered their path and terror barred the way
To unknown scenes, far different from the home
They'd loved and lost.

Forever toil must be their dole, and pain
And fear companions to the end of time.
The past was ended never to return,
The future dark and grim.

And all through life to build again
What had been lost through one excess,
Each generation marked by parents' sin—
A heavy penalty.

The earth was peopled and their offspring grew
To many multitudes; stretched far and near
The soil they tilled; with implements so crude
Made tents of skins.

Their flocks and herds grazed on the hillsides where
Green valleys lay between the mountain range
And cold and heat were theirs to conquer, too,
In unknown lands.

Years, centuries passed and man the conqueror
Of what impeded his advance to fame;
Learning and culture were attained and wealth
His coffers filled.

Creative mind reacted to his will;
He builded better than he knew, and now
Uncovered treasures of a bygone past
Reveal his art.

Powers, supposèd new to science now,
No secret were to prehistoric man,
And many are the buried secrets, too,
Still unrevealed.

Progression onward trod with wingèd feet;
The earth gave forth her riches manifold;
Discovery, invention and creative power
Builded the world.

Rome, Athens, Greece, in sculpture, learning, art,
Contributed to the progress of their time,
And each successive age its tribute paid
To higher form.

Man battled on through intervening years
To reach perfection through his art and power;
He rose, to fall again and yet again
But undiscouraged.

His vision—to regain what he had lost;
To climb to heights sublime and infinite;
To please again the God he had adored
And seek redemption.

And ever onward is the battle cry;
Failure is but a weapon to inspire;
Discouragement but lights the fires of will
To reach the summit.

From pyramids and sphinxes on the Nile
To towering spires in a new world,
His intuition still contrives to find
New fields for thought.

Once oxen trod the plowshares in the field;
Now tractors level prairies ripe with grain,
And roads of iron and steel great cities join
From sea to sea.

Ships cross the seas in days where once 'twere months,
And man-made wings, like birds, control the air;
Rivers and mountains are tunneled deep,
And mines belch wealth.

Bridges span the mighty depths and heights,
And magic masonry that holds back floods
And conserves water, so that arid plains
May bloom and thrive.

Vast fields of ice and snow their secrets hold,
But soon in future will their silence break;
Nothing can conquer mind's advancing power
Nor hide from science's search.

As each successive age survives the last
But adds to each new vision unforetold,
So will the mind of man and superman
Break down the bars.

If God is mighty and His power supreme,
So man, His image, will attain like power.
He said, "What do I, thou canst do."
His word is law.

If He controls the stars, and moon, and sun,
Holds back the waves and makes the lightning flash,
Man will eventually do the same—
If like to God.

Long ere the sun shall quenchèd be and dark,
Long ere the planets cease their functioning,
Long ere the moon shall cease to shed its light
Shall man be perfect.

Was it not planned that man should rule and be,
Like God, the head of all creation, too?
Was it not wise that he should suffer so
And know Gethsemane?

Too easy if no thorny paths be trod,
No drops of blood to fall from weary brow,
No tempter's power to feel and overcome,
No stubbled footpath tread.

'Tis only through affliction souls may rise,
The conqueror fights his way with iron and steel,
The victor's laureled crown rests on the brow
That bowed to win.

Progression is advancement toward the goal
The idealist sets himself, and runs its course
To make perfection of the threads that tangle him
With uplift head.

And when perfection looms within his view,
He grasps, to find it fading from his sight;
Still something unaccomplished he must do,
And try once more.

So ever onward will progression be;
A light to gleam when courage almost fails;
A glittering star now distant, now at hand,
To light the Way.

THE END